Numb. 95

The Female Tatler.

Written by a Society of Ladies.

Non habeat Metrona, tibi quæ Juncta recumbit,
Dicendi genus, aut Curvum Sermone rotato
Torqueat Enthymema, nec Hiſtorias Sciat omnes;
Sed quædam ex Libris & non intelligat. Juven.

From Friday February 17, to Monday February 20, 1710.

Lucinda's Day.

From my Drawing-Room.

Whenever I apprehend a great many Difficulties in an Undertaking, I commonly ſucceed beſt: When the Ladies that came to demand a Table of *Fame* were ſo little Unanimous about the regulating of it, I thought it would be impoſſible ever to make one without diſobliging abundance of my Sex But this Afternoon I was wonderfully pleaſed to ſee a Deputation of Maids, Married Women and Widows, come to Thank us for the Pains we had taken, and aſſure us, that we had given a general Satisfaction to our Sex. The Maids ſaid, that having received the greateſt Honour, in gratitude they could not but pay their Acknowledgment firſt; that *Marilla* of *Stilimena*, and the Glorious Captive of *Cyprus*, were noble Patterns of Female Fortitude inferior to none; but that which had laid the higheſt Obligation upon them, was our placing a Virgin Queen at the upper end, for which in the name of all the Virgins they were come to pay us their Reſpects. The married Women were ſo taken up with *Eleonor* of *Caſtile*'s ſucking the Poyſon out of her Husband's Wound, that they had almoſt forgot their Errand, which was to thank me, among many others, for the unparallel'd Example of *Arria*; and taking notice that her Action was a greater and more difficult piece of Gallantry than the Men could boaſt of, by which it appear'd that they were only the marry'd Women that could outdo the Men. At what they ſaid laſt, the Widows laugh'd heartily, and told us they were very well contented; as for their Parts they were very well aſſured that they had more reaſon to be ſatisfied than any, ſince they had outdone the other in numbers, and had cauſe to believe that the Juſtice done to a Dead Queen, was intended as a Shadow of what was due to a Living One, to whom they laid Claim.

My Siſter and I were overjoy'd, and juſt a going to make ſome handſom Speeches in return of their Civilities, when an old Gentleman who was come in with one of the Widows, prevented us, thus,

'Are theſe Ladies, ſay'd he, the Fruits of your extraordinary Education? Bleſs me, what do I live to 'ſee! Your Father was a Man of a very good Eſtate, 'and I am ſure he left you all very well, which way 'can you have ſquander'd away your Money, to be 'reduced ſo low as to Write *Tatlers?* When the Poor 'Gentleman was ſo eager to have you Learn *Latin*, I 'laugh'd a hundred times, and ask'd him what Girls 'ſhould do with *Latin?* But O! how I was pitied 'then for an Ignorant Soul! Happy am I that I never liſten'd to him; both my Daughters are Married 'and have Children, and if they had admir'd Learning 'as much as you do, Ten to One but they might have 'been Maids ſtill, and as far from Husbands as your 'ſelves. Depend upon it no Prudent Man will ever 'take a Wife that knows more than himſelf: Every 'body loves Women that are Gay and Witty, but 'Solidity and Learning are no more becoming them 'than Breeches; and *Latin* is as ungenteel a Furniture 'for the inſide of a Woman's Head, as a Beard is for 'the outſide: Young Women ſhou'd only Study how 'to get Husbands; you ſee Mr *Bickerſtaff*'s Siſter *Jenny* 'is happily Married: She writ *Tatlers* almoſt as well 'as her Brother, but unleſs he was out of the way 'ſhe never meddled with it, and then always remembred that ſhe was a Woman.

'As to your Female Table of *Fame*, if you intend 'thoſe Heroigns as Patterns for others to imitate, it is 'very fooliſh and altogether loſt to the Country you 'write in. Citizens want Wives that that are good 'Houſwives, and can better employ themſelves than 'in giving and receiving impertinent Viſits, that love 'their Home better than the Play-houſe, and ſtudy 'their Husbands Intereſt more than their own Pleaſure; that delight more in the Company of their 'Children, than in a Conſort of Muſick; are more 'expert at handling a Needle than Shuffling a Pack of 'Cards, and would rather wear one Suit Two Years, 'than incumber their Husbands with their Extravagancy. If you had given the Town a parcel of ſuch 'edyfying Examples of Women that had Honour'd 'and Obey'd their Husbands, and been Diſcreet to all 'the World beſides, you might have done ſome good, 'but of the Women you have named, there is ſcarce 'one that an Honeſt Man would be troubled with.

Arteſia ſeeing that the unmannerly Old Fellow had very much put me out of Humour, and fearing that I might too paſſionately ſhew my Reſentment, ſmilingly gave him the following Anſwer. 'By your Diſcourſe Sir, you once was an Acquaintance of my 'Father's, in Regard to whoſe Memory I ſhall not 'diſpute you the Freedom you take with us. To our 'Circumſtancies I find you are an utter Stranger, and 'as for the other I can aſſure you that if we had either 'of us been weary of our Liberty, and willing to be 'plagued with any of your Sex, we might long ago 'not only have had Husbands, but ſuch as the generality of the World calls Good Ones, which ſhews, 'that every body is not ſuch an inveterate Enemy to 'Women that underſtands *Latin* as your ſelf; but

'what

'what moſt offends you in us is our pretending to turn 'Authors: Pray, good Sir, why may not Women 'write *Tatlers* as well as Men, and why muſt it be 'counted the Refuge of People that have ſquander'd 'away their Money? The Frugal Mr *Bickerſtaff* was 'the firſt Inventor of them, and your Charge ſuits 'very little with the Character of that orderly and 'abſtemious Gentleman, that is ſo great a Pattern of 'Prudence as well as Virtue; but ſuppoſe *Tatlers* 'were writ for Money, are not moſt *Sermons* the ſame? 'Can any body think them the leſs uſeful for that, 'more than believe a *Phyſitians* Advice the worſe be-'cauſe he receives a Fee? But whether the Authors of '*Tatlers*, and all other Papers writ with the ſame de-'ſign, do it for Money or for Diverſion, it is an eaſy 'talk to ſhew, that no Employment can be more Ho-'nourable or Commendable; and ſince I have been 'provoked to ſay thus much for the Benefit of my own 'Sex, that might be Ignorant of the real Driſt of *Tat-'lers*, I ſhall here ſay ſomething of the Intent and 'Uſefulneſs of them.

The great Aim which the old Philoſophers and all Moraliſts, both antient and modern, have ever had in view, is the Happineſs of Society, by teaching every body to govern his own Affections, they made all the Members tollerable one to the other, and conſequently ſerviceable to the whole Body. What they cut out roughly, Tatlers endeavour to poliſh. Their Buſineſs was to reduce great numbers into a Society, and ours is to make them a Civiliſ'd and Polite Society: They contriv'd that they ſhould not deſtroy or hurt, but we take Pains that they ſhould likewiſe be agreeable and pleaſing to one another. Our intent is the ſame with that of the Ancient Stage, whilſt we are free from all the Objections that can be made againſt theModern; the Immorality of Plays, the Danger of the Looſe Ones of both Sexes that frequent them, and the greater Expence of Time and Money that ſome can afford, are Complaints that are all obviated and ſilenc'd in *Tatlers:* That Mr *Bickerſtaff* has a more happy Genius this way than any body elſe yet diſcovered, we don't diſpute, but his being the greateſt Maſtiff, proves not that all the reſt are Curs: A Man of Seven Foot has reaſon to brag of his Height, but he is in the wtong to call all Dwarfs that are under it. If we can but ſeldom divert People of refin'd Palates, we may often inſtruct thoſe of leſſer Capacities.

As to our Female Table of *Fame*, the Worthies that fill it were not given as Examples for *Engliſh* Women to Copy after, more than the Male Table was to *Engliſh* Men. *Alexander* who preſides at it, was an Arbitrary Tyrant, that without Right or Reaſon invaded every body's Property, and had Savage Ambition enough to have Burnt the World as well as Conquer'd it, if he had thought it would have added to his Glory. I ſay this to ſhew, that he and other Heroes were not put up for Patterns to be imitated in every thing they did, but only as Inſtances of greater Courage and Magnanimity than uſually falls in Men; and as every body knows that theſe high Qualifications are owing to an extraordinary Strength of the Soul, which but few Mortals can attain to, we had a mind for the Encouragement of our Sex, by thoſe Examgles to demonſtrate, that Women were as capable as Men of that Sublimity of the Soul, and had at leaſt equall'd if not excell'd the greateſt and moſt Heroick of the Cruel and Injurious Sex, that had uſed ſo many Artifices to enſlave them.

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